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ABSTRACT

The first section of this paper is an annotated bibliography of 33 studies of sexual bias in children's literature, followed by a summary of the significant findings that emerge from them. In the second section, the extent of sexual bias in library books found in local schools and libraries is determined by analyzing samples from three sources: (1) resources in the Williamsport Area School District, (2) a broader base of materials found in schools and libraries across the state of Pennsylvania, and (3) the top ten children's books of the past 200 years. These were analyzed using a rating scale that examined content, language, and pictures and that yielded a numerically weighted sexual bias score for each book. Both the studies summarized in the annotated bibliography and the analyses of the three new samples indicated a consistent male bias. Though that bias was softened in books written by females, the bias was still strong enough to reinforce the stereotyped female image that dominates children's literature. A copy of the sexual bias rating scale, together with directions for its use, is included in a final section. (AA)

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Sexual Bias In Children's Books: Annotated Bibliography And Comparative Study

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Research indicates that sex typing is one of the most important factors in the governance of behavorial development, motivation, and even self-concept. The effect of depicting the female sex, specifically, in stereotypical ways in children's media limits opportunities for personal growth and is negative in terms of healthy adult performance.

-- Celest M. Brody

Introduction

In recent years, educators have increasingly recognized that the school environment teaches children many things beyond what they are supposed to be learning from the process of education. Because of this, educators and others are taking a closer look at the vast array of inputs children receive as they take part in the teaching-learning experience. One area that has received considerable attention is the text and library books children read in doing their studies. We all know that children are brought in contact with these materials to expand their store of knowledge about various topical concerns. But are they also learning 'other things' that are critically important as well? many of those who have studied sexual bias in children's literature clearly believe that they are.

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The purpose of this report is twofold. Part I addresses the question —what are the main findings of those who have researched sexual bias in children's books? With this query in mind, we go on in Part I to present an annotated bibliography of significant studies on sexual bias in children's books and to summarize the main findings yielded by the studies. Part II turns to the question —what findings would we uncover as a result of studying several samples of children's library books? In this part, then, we take a look at the findings from samples of library books drawn from three different environmental sources. Lastly, we conclude with a summary wherein we compare the findings from the literature with the findings from our own studies, and report on the extent that agreement exists between these findings.

Sexual bias refers here to the prejudicial portrayal of one sex to the detriment of the other sex. Children's library books are those fiction books available in school and public libraries for children in the preschool, primary and/or intermediate grades to read. Findings relating to what research says about the extent of sexual bias in children's books is determined by doing a review and annotated summary of the main studies done on this topic over the last decade. The extent of sexual bias in library books found in local schools and libraries is determined by analyzing samples of library books from three sources. One, the original sample, is drawn from resources in the Williamsport Area School District; another, the matched sample, comes from a broader base of materials (600 books) found in schools and libraries across the state of Pennsylvania; and a final one, the popular sample, from the top ten best children's books of the past 200 years. All of these books were analyzed using a rating scale that provides for checking certain content (topical details), language (verbal expressions), and picture (graphic images) aspects of a book and yields a numerically weighted sexual bias score for each book.

I. Annotated Bibliography

Part one concerns itself with what researchers say about sexual bias in children's books. The women's liberation movement sparked widespread investigation into the world of children's books. Because of this numerous studies of sexual bias were conducted since 1970. From these studies we chose thirty-three as being significantly representative of the literature in the field on this topic. The studies deal with materials ranging from Mother Goose to Random House Dictionary of the English Language and were analyzed in terms of their purpose, procedures, and findings.

After reviewing the literature, thirty-three studies owing to their concreteness were identified as significant studies and compiled to form the annotated bibliography. Studies in the bibliography come from three sources. Twenty-four appear in journals, seven in the ERIC File, and two in booklets, They are also classified in terms of their research focus. Those dealing primarily with library books have a L placed by their review; those dealing with children's textbooks a T; and those dealing with both a M for mixed. Presented below, then, are thirty-three studies and an outline of their purpose, procedures, and findings.

ANNOTATED STUDIES

T American Association of School Administrators. "Sex Equality in Education Materials. AASA Executive Handbook Series, Vol. 4, No. 1," ERIC, ED 111 096, 1975. 24pp

The purpose of this report is to examine sex stereotyping in textbooks and provide a handbook that tells how to go about eliminating it. Various findings from studies on sex stereotyping in textbooks are summarized. The findings indicate that the texts fail to present the world as it has been and is, leaving students tragically unready for the world in which they will live their adult lives. Suggestions offered to "counteract sex stereotypes in educational materials" include contacting publishers, establishing guidelines for accepting new materials, and developing materials.

L Bernstein, Joanne. "The Changing Roles of Females in books for Young Children," The Reading Teacher. March 1974, p.545-549.

The purpose of this study is to provide teachers with a list of children's books which portray girls in a positive light. Twelve out of twenty-one major publishers allowed Bernstein to examine all the books they considered to be concerned with female protagonists. She found that many of the recommended books actually have males as main characters with females in auxiliary roles, and wound up with fewer than 100 books. Twenty-two of the acceptable books she describes and heartily recommends. Bernstein concludes that a start is being made to correct the maligned image of the female in children's literature, but that many more books with girl protagonists are needed.

L Bissett, Donald J. "Books in the Classroom," Elementary English. October 1973, p.1094-1100.

Bissett overviews a study of girls in children's books conducted by Sally Hannert, and then reviews a number of books for children that deal with women and girls. Hannert examined an extensive number of picture books and divided about 60 which she felt she could recommend into three categories: Books illustrating equality of male and female characters, books with positive female characters in specifically female roles, and positive female characters outside traditional female roles. She concluded that (1) positive female characters are hard to locate in picture books, (2) it is even more difficult to locate books with positive female major characters representing minority groups, (3) there are few major characters in picture books where females are outside traditional roles, and (4) there is a need for more non-sexist picture books.

T Britton, Gwyneth E. "Why Jane Can't Win (Sex Stereotyping and Career Role Assignments in Reading Materials)." ERIC, ED 092 919, May 1974, 39p.

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if sex stereotyping exists in reading materials for grades 1-10, to determine if a majority of the stories show one sex in a dominant role, to explore types of career roles for females and males, and to determine the number of different career roles depicted for females and males. A research team analyzed stories in each text of 16 different reading series according to criteria adopted from Dick and Jane as Victims by Women on Words and Images. All team members were first oriented to the procedures. The study findings indicated pre-determined sex role behaviors, social attitudes and values are directed toward children by the reading series. The study concludes with a list of recommendations that need to be taken in order to correct the situation.

M Brody, Celeste M. "Do Instructional Materials Reinforce Sex Stereotyping?" Educational Leadership. November 1973, p.119-122.

Brody discusses the problem of sex-stereotyping in instructional materials in terms of its detrimental affect on boys and girls. She cites numerous research studies to support her arguments against it. Brody concludes that new role models are necessary and that the concept of masculine virtues and feminine characteristics must be reevaluated, because there are only human virtues, and these are desirable for both sexes.

M Chevat, Edith S. "Women and Girls in Readers and Texts." ERIC, ED 110 974, May 1975, 14p.

Chevat examines various studies that have been done on sex-role stereotyping found in texts, workbooks, and reading aids used from kindergarten to college. She concludes that the portrayal of the male as a multi-dimensional being pitted against or separated from the female who does not excel in anything but being kind and 'motherly', as well as omissions and numerical out-numberings, tends to make girls and women less than people, and in so doing also debases the humanity of boys and men. She continues then to suggest a variety of approaches and exercises to be used in developing student and teacher awareness of sex-stereotyping and prejudice.

L Easley, Ann. "Elements of Sexism in a Selected Group of Picture Books Recommended for Kindergarten Use." ERIC, ED 104 559, 1973, 34p.

The purpose of this study was to examine 100 picture books, recommended in a kindergarten text, for elements of sexism. Notations for the books were made on a survey sheet. Each book was scanned for visual effect of illustrations, boy or girl-centered story, presence of male or female main characters, evidence of stereotypical and unusual roles, and whether the book gave equal treatment to both sexes. Findings were then tabulated in six tables. The study substantiated that a great disparity exists in the treatment of the sexes in children's picture books. Illustrations were predominately male centered, as well as the stories' texts.

L Feminists on Children's Literature. "A Feminist Look at Children's Books," Library Journal. January 15, 1971, p.235-240.

This article reports the findings of a group effort to scrutinize some of the more highly praised children's

books. Selections were made from a number of influential lists which included Notable Books of 1969, the Child Study Association's annual recommendations for the same year, and the Newberry Award Winners. Few of the books on these lists even featured female characters. Those that did were assigned to one of four categories: the Sexist Book, the Cop-Out Book, Positive Images, and Especially For Girls (not sexist by the most stringent feminist standards).

T Gaite, A.J.H. "Sex Role Stereotyping and Basal Readers," Instructor. November 1974, p.30.

This article reports the research of Saario, Jacklin, and Tittle. They studied the extent and kind of sex role stereotyping found in the kindergarten to third grade reading textbooks of four major publishers. In the study every third story in each of the series of readers was examined. All characters were scrutinized, judged, and classified in a taxonomy of attributes relating to sex roles. The findings included the following: The stories contained significantly more male than female characters. Male and female adult characters tended to be shown in different environments. It seems that sex role stereotyping restricts the choices which each sex perceives as being available and thus confines opportunity and potential.

T Gershuny, H.Lee. " Public Doublespeak: The Dictionary," College English. April 1975, p.938-942.

The purpose of this study was to systemically investigate the unabridged Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1966) for its use of masculine and feminine nouns and pronouns in illustrative sentences. Gershuny found that the dictionary easily reinforced sex role stereotypes and sexism.

T Graebner, Dianne Bennett. "A Decade of Sexism in Readers," The Reading Teacher. October 1972, p.52-58.

The purpose of this study was to examine the question of whether school readers reflect a changing female role. Old and new editions of two reading series, Scott, Foresman and Co. and Ginn and Co., were studied. The findings show that boys dominate the story texts and pictures in the new editions as well as the old. There has apparently been no effort to make the activities of males and females any less typed by sex. The study concludes that school readers have not kept pace with a changing society.

M Hagar, Margaret E. and Deffenbaugh, Sue. "Does Mama Bear Always Serve the Porridge? Sex-role Stereotyping in School Reading Materials." ERIC, ED 099 806, November 1974, 13p.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the problem of sex-role stereotyping in terms of the children teachers work with everyday, and the sex-role messages communicated to them through schools. The findings of the study on sex bias in reading materials by Women on Words and Images are summarized. Recommendations to deal with the scarcity of unbiased instructional materials are listed.

M Hall, Joan Joffe. "Growing Up As a Female Reader," 51% Minority. National Education Association: Connecticut Conference on the Status of Women, 1972, p.58-60.

Hall briefly overviews the paucity of stories showing different roles for male and female. She cites examples in children's library books and readers of stereotypes. The findings indicate that, if the story generalizes and wants a typical child, that child will usually be a boy.

M Higgs, Margaret and Stewig, John. "Girls Grow Up to Be Mommies: A Study of Sexism in Children's Literature," Library Journal. January 15, 1973, p.236-241.

Higgs and Stewig first critically reviewed selected studies relating to sexism in children's books and textbooks. They concluded that many findings were vague and unscientific. Then they conducted their own survey of women's roles in 154 randomly chosen picture books. In their analysis all representations of women were carefully noted and categorized. The conclusion reached as a result of their research is that women indeed play a subordinate, home-related role. They are not depicted in the rich variety of professional roles in which they are engaged today.

L Hillman, Judith Stevinson. "An Analysis of Male and Female Roles in Two Periods of Children's Literature," Journal of Educational Research. October 1974, p.84-88.

The purpose of this study was to identify changes in the sexual role standards of males and females in two periods of children's literature, the 1930's and the mid-1960's to mid-1970's. Criteria were established for book selection,

and each book was analyzed twice. The results suggest that children now are finding more females in their books, slightly more occupational diversity for females, and a greater variety of behaviors and emotions expressed by males and females. Females are not characterized as frequently as males in literature, though there is a trend in this direction.

T Jay, Winifred T. and Schminke, Clarence W. "Sex Bias in Elementary School Texts," The Arithmetic Teacher. March 1975, p.242-246.

The article reports the findings of a study which analyzed twelve selected mathematics textbooks for grades two, four, and six for sex stereotyping. The findings indicate definite evidences of inequality of treatment of the sexes in the manifest content of the material. If materials used by students continue to favor one sex over the other, it will mean a waste of human potential, and result in unfulfilled, dissatisfied individuals.

L Kelty, Jean McClure. "The Cult of Kill in Adolescent Fiction," English Journal. February 1975, p.56-61.

Kelty examines various samples of adolescent fiction to find just how boys in fiction are encouraged to regard nature as hostile and alien, something to be overcome. She cites examples of boys involved in violence and killing in literature. She concludes that the stereotyping of girls in fiction is important, but probably not as detrimental as the way boys are stereotyped to regard the cult of kill as a necessary step to manhood and world of adult reality.

L Nadesan, Ardell. "Mother Goose: Sexist?" Elementary English. March 1974, p.375-378.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether Mother Goose rhymes are sexist. A survey of the rhymes suggests they are. Many rhymes support stereotypes, and male references far outnumber female ones.

L Nelson, Gayle. "The Double Standard in Adolescent Novels," English Journal. February 1975, p.53-55.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether adolescent literature reinforces the wife/mother model or provides alternative models. Nelson examined the five novels most commonly read by her eleventh and twelfth grade women students. All five novels contained stereotyped characters and situations. Nelson concluded that more model diversity must be offered to adolescents.

M Nilsen, Alleen Pace. "Books A La Mode: A Reader's Digest," Elementary English. October 1973, p.1029-1033.

Nilsen discusses sexual stereotyping in children's library books and textbooks, the implications, and possible approaches to the problem. She points out various studies whose findings consistently program girls to be nonachievers. Stereotypes continue to dominate, even in the recently published Ginn 360 series. She concludes that teachers must learn to distinguish between truth and partial truth and teach students the skills needed to recognize stereotypes.

L Nilsen, Alleen Pace. "Women in Children's Literature," College English. May 1971, p.918-926.

The purposes of this study are to survey twenty years of Caldecott Award winners and runners-up for women characters and their roles and to discuss possible reasons for the prejudice against girls. Reasons for prejudice are found in the English language, problems with artists, and emphasis supported by publishers. Results of the survey of Caldecott winners indicate a real need for books presenting models which show accurately and realistically ways in which women and girls function successfully as individuals.

T O'Donnell, Richard W. "Sex Bias in Primary Social Studies Textbooks," Educational Leadership. November 1973, p.137-141.

This study was undertaken to see if pictures in primary social studies textbooks are sexually discriminating in role distinctions. Basic texts were selected and each picture was examined according to a list of categories. The results indicated consistent imbalance in every category; thus the texts were male-dominated. The study concludes that using textbooks that are biased presents limited role models to female students which could affect their goals and aspirations.

M Rose, Karel. "Sleeping Beauty Awakes: Children's Literature and Sex Role Myths." ERIC,ED 089 322, November 1973, 9p.

This paper presents studies to support the premise that children's trade and text books are permeated by an ur reality that has far reaching implications for intellectual achievement and individual functioning in a democracy. Children's literature reflects male and female sexual myths. Numerous studies indicate that internalization of sexual myths is distructive to the female's self-image. Maccoby's study on "Sex Differences in Intellectual

Functioning" found a tendency for the more passive-dependent children to perform poorly on a variety of intellectual tasks and for independent children to excel, suggesting that for girls and women the evidence consistently points to masculinity as a correlate of intellectuallity.

T Scardina, Florence. "Sexism in Textbooks in Pittsburgh Public Schools, Grades K-5." ERIC, ED 096 224, 1972, 20p.

The purpose of this study by the members of the East End Education Committee was to review thirty-six textbooks used by the Pittsburgh Public Schools to see how girls vs. boys and women vs. men are treated. Language, reading, science, social studies, and mathematics textbooks were reviewed. The findings reported blatent sexism.

T Schnell, Thomas R. and Sweeney, Judith. "Sex-Role Bias in Basal Readers," Elementary English. May 1975, p.737-742.

The purpose of this study is to examine the 1966 and 1971 Houghton Mifflin reading books to see if the newer series reflects a change in roles, activities, and relative importance of male and female characters. A total of 325 stories from the pre-primer through sixth grade books were read and analyzed. The results of the study indicated no positive changes. Stories featuring girls decreased by 23%. The 1971 Houghton Mifflin series does not reflect a significant departure from the 1966 series in the manner in which males and females are portrayed.

M Seven, S.A. "Sex-Role Stereotypes in Children's Books," Claremont Reading Conference. 1972, p.90-93.

The purpose of this paper is to look at the way the sexes are portrayed in children's books. By examining research Seven considers the relative frequency of occurrence of the two sexes, their characteristics and their roles. Findings consistently show females as underrepresented in children's books. Familiar stereotyped characteristics and roles are perpetuated. Seven concludes that although children's books neglect the female role, perhaps their greatest disservice is that they imply by their sterile, uninteresting models that the adult role, male and female, is dull and unrewarding.

T Shirreffs, Janet H., Ph.D. "Sex-Role Stereotyping in Elementary School Health Education Textbooks," The Journal of School Health. November 1975, p.519-523.

The purpose of this study is to analyze and evaluate the content and illustrations of elementary school health education texts with regard to stereotyping. Five major elementary school health education series' texts (grades one through six) which were published in the United States from 1969 to 1974 were analyzed and evaluated according to the guidelines established by the Task Force to Study Sex Discrimination in the Kalamazoo, Michigan Public Schools. The major finding is that sex-role stereotyping does exist and pervades several of the elementary school health education texts in both illustrative and narrative portions of the series.

L Tate, Janice M. "Sexual Bias in Science Fiction for Children," Elementary English. October 1973, p.1061-1094.

The purpose of this study is to discover the sexual bias of current children's science fiction for grades three through six. The forty-nine volumes of science fiction recommended in the most commonly used lists were read and evaluated. This study indicates, according to Tate, that as children's science fiction develops it ceases to be considered a genre for boys only, but is frequently written with both sexes in mind as is clearly shown by the growing number of books with significant male and female characters.

T Taylor, Marjorie E. "Sex-Role Stereotypes in Children's Readers," Elementary English. October 1973, p.1045-1047.

Taylor participated in a study of sex-stereotyping in the California reading series and in this article discusses the findings. The textbooks studied fail to help prepare girls for future realities, and they contribute subtly and significantly to the formation of negative self-images. Analysis also shows that many stories in the textbooks simply do not portray any females in positive roles. At least 75% of the main characters are male. Females are portrayed as less active, creative, and inventive. Taylor warns, to go on damaging future generations of girls and boys with these same bankrupt stereotypes is unthinkable.

L Weitzman, Lenore J. and Eifler, Deborah; Hokada, Elizabeth; Ross, Catherine. "Sex-Role Socialization in Picture Books for Preschool Children," American Journal of Sociology. May 1972, p.1125-1150.

The purpose of this study is to examine how sex roles are treated in the Caldecott winners and runners-up

for the past five years. The findings reveal that females are underrepresented in the titles, central roles, pictures, and stories. In terms of activities boys are active and girls are passive. The image of the adult woman as a role model is stereotyped and limited. In fact, the occupational distribution presented for females in the sampled books is even worse than the real inequitable distribution of employment in the professions. The study suggests that the girls and women depicted in these books are a dull and stereotyped lot.

T Weitzman, Lenore J. and Rizzo, Diane. "Sex Bias in Textbooks," Todays Education. January-February 1975, p.49+.

This article summarizes the ways in which the two sexes are portrayed and the type of behavior encouraged for each in the latent content of the most widely used textbook series in the United States in each of five subject areas: science, arithmetic, reading, spelling, and social studies. The data was obtained through computer analysis in a three year study. The findings indicate that males overwhelmingly predominate in all series. As the textbooks increase in sophistication, women become less numerous and, by implication, less significant as role models. The pictures of children show striking differences between boys and girls in physical activity, intelligence and emotional expression. Weitzman and Rizzo conclude that children are being warped by the latent messages in their textbooks. They also emphasize that it is up to teachers to counteract the latent messages and create positive images of adult women in the minds of students.

T Wiik, Susan L. "The Sexual Bias of Textbook Literature," English Journal. February 1973, p.224-229.

The purpose of this study was to extensively research the quantity and quality of female characters in literature textbooks. Wiik selected for examination fifteen literature anthologies which are frequently used by her and by other seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade teachers in her junior high school. The results of the research show that current textbook literature does not in any way assist a female adolescent in establishing a satisfactory self-concept. Instead it perpetuates the female stereotypes which cruelly limit and define an adolescent female in terms of second class status.

T Women on Words & Images. Dick and Jane As Victims. Princeton, New Jersey, 1972, 58p.

The purpose of this study is to examine current readers and compare the way in which girls are portrayed in the stories as contrasted with the treatment of boys. One

hundred thirty-four elementary school readers from fifteen different publishers were analyzed. Observations were recorded on numerically coded worksheets. The statistical findings show that boys and men are present in overwhelmingly larger numbers than are girls and women. Female biographical stories are scarce. Women appear in only twenty-six occupations, while men participate in 147 different jobs. An in-depth content analysis is presented. It points out additional sex-role stereotypes that can be detrimental to the development of children. In conclusion, the authors recommend that readers now in use should be revised. Blatant bias must be erased. Sensitivity to sex-role stereotyping is a matter of conciousness-raising and can best be done by group discussion and open-ended debate.

The annotated bibliography presented here summarizes thirty-three studies. We find that fourteen studies have a textbook focus, and eleven studies a library focus. Eight studies have a mixed focus of both textbooks and library books. Also, five of the library book studies examine picture books exclusively. Moreover, little research on library books for older children seems to exist. Looking at the sex of the authors reveals a female majority. Twenty-five of the studies were done by females, four by males, and four by combinations of both sexes. Therefore, 75% of the studies are written by females, 12.5% by males, and 12.5% by both. Lastly, the research reviewed above consistently supports seven main findings which are:

1. Males overwhelmingly outnumber females in library books and textbooks.
2. Females are usually depicted in limited and stereotyped roles.
3. Illustrations and content of library books and textbooks are predominately male centered.
4. Few books on influential lists (i.e. Newberry, Notables, Caldecott) feature positive female characters.

5. Males are found in far more occupations than females.

6. Most recent editions of reading series do not have positive sex role changes when compared to older editions.

7. Library books and textbooks usually give children a distorted and hence potentially dangerous view of reality.

Library and textbooks are both found guilty either of misrepresenting or ignoring females. Males and females are misrepresented in that they are depicted in stereotyped activities, in stereotyped roles, and with stereotyped feelings. Males are active while females observe them. Males are doctors and lawyers and mountainclimbers and astronauts and detectives and lumberjacks, while females are teachers and secretaries and nurses and mothers and mothers and mothers. Males are fearless and strong, while females are fearful and helpless. Such blatent stereotyping which detrimentally misrepresents females is further aggravated by the virtual absence of females in many books. (Several researchers indicated that even locating a book with a female protagonist is often a difficult task.) Females in children's books, then, are generally treated as stereotyped or they are conspicuously absent. In sum, they are pictured for children as grossly distorted caricatures or they are not pictured at all, and thus personified as members of a faceless and voiceless minority whose destiny is not so much to reason why but rather to stand by, faithfully serve and stoically die.

A central purpose of public education is to teach each child to read. Behind this purpose, of course, is another expectation often glossed over by educators and critics alike. That is, a child should be able to read so that he/she has access to the broader world of ideas and will develop and use enlightened judgment to guide his/her actions. As a result, the content ideas and images one intakes in reading a book are just as important as the skills required to read that book.

From the child's entry into school, he/she is encouraged to use library books as a supplementary means for acquiring and/or strengthening his/her reading skills. Because of this most school buildings have libraries stocked with books for various aged children. Teachers in many cases maintain collections of children's books in the classroom and/or encourage taking field trips to local public libraries. Reading centers are frequently established, time set aside for library activities, and children keep careful records of the books they read. Since library books are vie ed as an important part of a child's reading program, it would do us well to know for sure what ideas and images populate the books they read.

That children's books contain sex-role stereotypes is becoming increasingly apparent as research in the area of sexual bias is reported. Seven found that females are frequently underrepresented in children's books, and males and females are misrepresented by the stereotyped images of active, capable males and passive, dependent females (Seven, p.93). Weitzman and Eifler determined "the simplified and stereotyped images" in their sample of books to be of such "a narrow view of reality that they must violate the child's own knowledge of a rich and complex world (Weitzman and Eifler, p.1147)." Hester writes, "we are realizing more and more how deeply... sexist stereotypes permeate past and present writing (Hester, p.712)."

Research is also disclosing that sex-role stereotyping can result in dangerous consequences. It seems to restrict the choices which each sex

perceives as being available and thus confines opportunity and potential (Gaite, P.30). Hagar and Deffenbaugh elaborate, "Sex-role stereotyping is the process by which people are defined by their sex, rather than by their thoughts, feelings, interests, abilities. It is the portrayal of people in "typical" situations as determined by their sex, and does not allow either males or females to express the totality of their humanity (Hagar and Deffenbaugh, p.1)." Sweeney and Schnell continue, if schools are to develop the full potential of all children, books must strive to portray people more realistically (Sweeney and Schnell,p.742). With evidence indicating that sex-role stereotyping may actually be harmful to the normal personality development of the child, it becomes imperative that children's books be carefully examined (Weitzman and Eifler, p.1147)!

Part II of this paper reports on an investigation done to find out whether sexual bias is present in children's library books to the extent that researchers claim. Thus, it considers the application of the Elementary School Library Book Self-Study Rating Guide (A. Buhl, 1973) to analyze and rate the extent of sexual bias in three different samples of children's books. This instrument consists of 26 items relating to three analytic dimensions: Content (11 items), Language (4 items), and Picture (11 items). Each item is rated in terms of a five point scale having points ranging from 'male only' to 'female only.' The scores could then be added and averaged to determine individual dimension and total average scores for each book and/or sample of books under study. A score of three or there abouts indicates an orientation both to males and females, while 2.5 and there abouts points to a male oriented book, and 3.5 and thereabouts a female oriented book.

As mentioned, this instrument was used to determine the amount of sexual bias in three different samples of books. Sample one, the original sample, consisted of 12 recommended books for each grade from first through eighth (or 96 books) drawn from the libraries of elementary schools in the

Williamsport school district. Sample two, the matched sample, consisted of the same types of books (12 recommended books for each grade, 1-8 or 96 books) selected from a group of 600 previously rated books randomly drawn from school and/or library collections in school districts across the state of Pennsylvania. The final sample contained eleven books designated by the Children's Literature Association as the ten most popular books of the past 200 years (eleven titles were on the list because two books tied for tenth place). Moreover, a conscious effort was made in selecting each sample to give attention to books written by female and male authors.

Books in these samples were analyzed and rated in terms of bias scores for their content, language, and picture dimensions and a total average score. Then these scores were summarized in terms of three basic sets of grade level scores (primary 1-3, intermediate 4-6, and upper grades 7-8) and a Total Average score for the entire sample of books. Figure 1 presents the dimension and total average scores of the original and matched samples for the primary, intermediate, and upper grades.

FIGURE 1

Comparison of Original/Matched Grade Level Averages

Level	N	Content	Language	Picture	N*	Tot. Average
Primary	36	2.05	2.75	2.02	36	2.54
Intermed.	36	2.25	2.44	2.47	29	1.94
Upper	24	2.17	2.40	2.53	11	2.34
Overall Av.	**96**	**2.16**	**2.55**	**2.26**	**76**	**2.27**

*N= No. of books containing illustrations

Primary	36	2.21	2.36	2.12	36	2.23
Intermed.	36	2.70	2.40	2.53	36	2.55
Upper	24	2.51	2.22	2.37	20	2.36
Overall Av.	96	2.47	2.34	2.33	92	2.38

Grade level analysis of the original sample runs as follows. Primary level books have rating scores of 2.05 for content, 2.75 for language, and 2.02 for pictures. Two dimensions, content and picture, show much bias while language shows only a very little. The total average (2.27) for the level is the lowest total average of the three levels. It is also interesting to note that the primary picture rating is the lowest rating score. This is important because the highest percentage of books that have illustrations are found at the primary level. The intermediate level books have rating scores of 2.25 for content, 2.44 for language, and 2.47 for pictures. All three dimensions are male biased. The total average (2.36) for this level is the highest total average of the three levels. This occurs because the intermediate level is only level containing two nonsexist scores--3.00 for the grade four language dimension and 3.06 for the grade five picture dimension. The upper level books have rating scores of 2.17 for content, 2.40 language, and 2.53 for pictures. As with the primary and intermediate dimensional averages, all three dimensions are male biased. The level average in the picture dimension is the highest of the three levels. It must be recognized, however, that this rating results from an examination of the smallest number of books, eleven out of twenty-five, since the use of pictures tends to decrease at the upper level. Lastly, the total average for the upper level is 2.34.

In looking at the total averages for the sample, we find male bias for each dimension. The rating scores are 2.16 for content, 2.55 for language, and 2.26 for pictures. The total average for the ninety-six books is 2.23. The content score reflects the highest bias, while the language dimension reflects the least bias. The grade level findings indicate a consistent male bias in the sample for the content, language, and picture dimensions at each level, primary, intermediate and upper.

Numerically, the breakdown looks much the same. Nine books (9.4%) of the total are female biased; nine (9.4%) have averages within .1 of 3.0 and are rated non-sexist; and 78 (81.2%) have averages falling in the male bias range. These figures are particularly interesting when we note that 58% of the authors are female. The point remains, however, regardless of how we view it—this 96 book sample is characterized by an indubitable male bias.

Next we examined a matched sample of 96 books drawn from 600 children's library books previously rated by students in graduate elementary curriculum courses at the Penn State University and by Pennsylvania ASCD members from across the state. The primary level books have rating scores of 2.21 for content, 2.36 for language, 2.12 for pictures. All three dimensions are male biased. The picture rating score is the lowest dimensional score for the entire sample, and the total average (2.23) is the lowest total average for the three levels in the sample. The intermediate scores are 2.70 for content, 2.40 for language, and 2.53 for pictures. Although all three dimensions are male biased, each dimensional score has the highest score of the three sample dimensions. Upper level scores are 2.51 for content, 2.22 for language, and 2.37 for pictures. Here again, we have dimensional averages that are all male biased. The total average for the level is 2.36; so as might be guessed, it too is male biased.

The grade level dimension total averages are 2.47 for content, 2.34 for language, and 2.33 for pictures with the content scores showing the highest and the picture scores the lowest amounts of bias. The overall total average for the 96 books is 2.38 which is again male biased. Hence we have another situation where male bias is clearly in evidence both for the various dimensions and for the sample as a whole. As for the numerical distribution it is: 11 books (11.5%) fall in the female bais range, 10(10.4%) in the nonsexist range, and 75(78.1%) in the male bias range. This last figure again is quite high when you realize that 54% of the books were authored by females.

The final aim of this section was to determine the sexual bias present in the best children's books of the past 200 years. Figure 2 details the titles, rank of the books and their dimensional and average rating scores.

FIGURE 2

THE TOP TEN BOOK TITLES AND OVERALL AVERAGES

1. Charlotte's Web
2. Where the Wild Things Are
3. Tom Sawyer
4. Little Women
5. Huck Finn
6. Little House in the Big Woods
7. Johnny Tremain
8. Wizard of Oz
9. Little House on the Prarie
10. Julie of the Wolves (Tie)
11. Island of Blue Dolphins

N	CONTENT	LANGUAGE	PICTURE	n*	TOTAL AVERAGE
11	2.30	2.61	2.69	9	2.52

n*= Number of books containing illustrations.

The dimension scores read-content 2.30, language 2.61 and picture 2.69, and the total average is 2.52. The scores are generally higher here (probably because of the smallness of the sample) but the tendency still favors the male bias. Of the eleven books analyzed 2 (18.2%) fall in the female bias range, 3 (27.3%) in the nonsexist range, and 6(54.5%) in the male bias range. Again the scores indicate that over 50% of the books read by children reflect a male bias. Five of the eleven books were written by females, with the two showing a female bias being among these five. On the other side, however, the three nonsexist books were written by men, and three of the six male biased books were written by females.

Figure 3 presents a summary comparison of the dimensional and total averages for all three samples.

FIGURE 3

Comparison of Sample/Dimension averages

Dimensions	Original Sample	Matched Sample	Popular Sample	Average
Content	2.16	2.47	2.30	2.31
Language	2.55	2.34	2.61	2.50
Picture	2.26	2.33	2.69	2.43
Tot. Average	2.32	2.38	2.53	2.41

Once we collapsed all the data for the entire mass of 203 books we ended up with the following figures. Total dimensional averages are content 2.31, language 2.50, and picture 2.43, and the overall summary average is 2.41. All of the figures reflect a distinct male bias. Content, which scored low in the original and popular samples also comes out reflecting the greatest amount of male bias in the summary. Picture, which scored mid-range in the original and matched samples, also comes out as the middle average; and language which was scored differently in each sample ends up having the highest average. This order seems quite reasonable because the rating scores were lower and more consistent for the two dimensions where the number of analytic study items were largest (Content 11 items and Picture 11 items). Moreover, in this instance, the total summary average is pulled down to 2.41 by the lower ratings of the content and picture dimensions—i.e. those dimensions having the largest number of study items.

As for the samples, the averages were original 2.32, matched 2.38, and popular 2.53, and the total summary average was 2.41. All of these averages again indicate a clear male bias. Also, we find the original and matched samples (which involved samples of 96 books each) having both lower and more closely ranged rating scores (2.32 and 2.38). In this case, the

summary total average is pulled up to 2.41 by the high rating score of the popular sample (which consisted of only 11 books). What we find then are two things. All of the dimensions and samples are characterized by a male bias; and this male bias increases dramatically (from a 2.50 to a 2.40 average rating) as a greater number of analytic items and books are brought into play.

Another type of comparison considered had to do with the numerical distribution of sexual bias among the samples studied. Figure 4 presents the findings of this comparison.

FIGURE 4

Numerical Distribution by Samples

	Female Bias N/%	Nonsexist N/%	Male Bias N/%	Total N/%
Original Sample	9/9.4	9/9.4	78/81.2	96/100
Matched Sample	11/11.5	10/10.4	75/78.1	96/100
Popular Sample	2/18.2	3/27.3	6/54.5	11/100
Totals	22/10.8	22/10.8	159/78.4	203/100

Examination shows that about 10% of the books fall in the female biased and nonsexist categories, and about 80% in the male biased category in the original and matched samples. In the popular sample (which has only 11 books) we have larger percentages for the female biased and nonsexist, 18 and 27% respectively, but we still have a male bias figure that exceeds 50% (54%). As for the summary total figures, they work out as follows - female bias 10.8%, nonsexist 10.8%, and male bias 78.4%. These figures, then support the conclusion that male bias is evident in slightly over 75% of the

books read by children, while female bias and/or nonsexist orientations characterize slightly under 25% of the books read by children.

One final point worth noting has to do with the ratings of books authored by females and males. Figure 5 presents data on the ratings of female and male authored books for the three samples investigated in Part II of the study.

FIGURE 5

Comparison of Female/Male Averages

Samples	Female-Authored		Male-Authored		Total	
	N	TA	N	TA	N	TA
Original	56	2.4	39	2.2	95	2.3
Matched	52	2.5	43	2.2	95	2.4
Popular	5	2.7	6	2.4	11	2.5
	113	2.5	88	2.3	201	2.4

*One book both in the Original and Matched samples was the product of joint authorship.

The ratio of female to male authors is about 55% to 44% in the original and matched samples, and the reverse in the popular sample. When the averages are compared however, we find out that they reflect a male bias, although the bias is consistly somewhat weaker among the female authors. Thus in the original and matched samples and the summary average (which involved the largest number of books) we have 2.4, 2.5 and 2.5 female scores respectively as compared to 2.2, 2.2 and 2.3 for males in the same categories. Moreover, when we put all these averages together with the popular sample (F=2.7 and M=2.4) we end up with a total summary average of 2.4. The female total average of 2.5 is only .1 over this summary average. Here again we have two points that can be made. One is that children's books written by female authors still reflect a male bias; and the other is that the male bias is

not as strong in books penned by females as it is in those done by males.

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Summary

This paper has several aims. One was to review the literature to discover the major findings about sexual bias in children's books. Another had to do with investigating several samples of children's books in order to paint our own picture concerning sexual bias in children's books. A final one relates to comparing the findings from the two sources in order to determine the extent of agreement between their findings.

In Part I we annotated and summarized the findings of 33 studies on sexual bias in children's books. From these studies we derived seven main findings:

1. Males overwhelmingly outnumber females in library books and textbooks.
2. Females are usually depicted in limited and stereotyped roles.
3. Illustrations and content of library books and textbooks are predominately male centered.
4. Few books on influential lists (i.e. Newberry, Notables, Caldecott) feature positive female characters.
5. Males are found in far more occupations than females.
6. Most recent editions of reading series do not have positive sex role changes when compared to older editions.
7. Library books and textbooks usually give children a distorted and hence potentially dangerous view of reality.

Consequently, we concluded that children's books err in two important respects. One is that they clearly reflect a significant male bias. The other is that even in cases where females are depicted, they are sketched either as stereotyped caricatures or they are treated as background figures who are members of a faceless and voiceless minority that exists to help men make the decisions and changes that shape the world.

In part II we described the procedures/findings of three personal investigations of various samples of children's books. From these investi-

gations we came up with the following points:

1. All the dimensions and samples are characterized by a male bias. (Content is the most serious offender)

2. The male bias increases dramatically (from a 2.50 to a 2.4 average rating) as a greater number of analytic items and books are brought into play.

3. Slightly over 75% of the books children read have a male bias.

4. Slightly under 25% of the books children read have a female or non-sexist orientation.

5. Children's books written by female authors also reflect a definite male bias.

6. The male bias is not as strong in books penned by females as it is in those done by males. (Female average 2.5/male 2.3)

Once again, then, we conclude that children's books clearly reflect a significant male bias. We also conclude that male bias although softened in books penned by females still exists enough to reinforce the stereotyped and shadowy female image that dominates much of children's literature.

What do we find when we compare the results of Parts I and II? The results show that the male bias reported on in the annotated studies is firmly supported by the bias ratings of the three samples. It matters not whether the books are library or textbooks, award winners or not, old or new, primary, intermediate or upper level, male or female authored, or highly recommended or the most popular - they still reflect a distinctive male bias. Such findings further indicate that there is also a dire need for writers who will produce a new mass of unbiased reading materials for children and youth.

Male bias exists in children's books, then, and will continue to exist until books are written to incorporate the following changes:

1. The use of sex stereotypes and preconceived notions of sex roles must be eliminated.

2. The number of females in library books should begin to approach the number of males.

3. Stories should feature females as well as males as the main character(s).

4. Females should appear in as many and as varied roles and occupations as males.

Moreover, the content, language and pictures of all levels of books must be revised in light of these changes; for it is only as this is done that harmful sexual bias will be eradicated and a more humanistic concept of personal and social development realized.

SEXUAL BIAS RATING SCALE

Introduction:

This rating scale is intended to measure sexual bias in elementary school library books. The rating scale includes three scales; content, language, and picture. Each scale purports to examine the sexual bias, if any, in the three areas identified by the scales.

The entire scale consists of 26 criteria (items); the content and picture scales each include 11 items, and the language scale includes four items.

Directions:

Please read and briefly think about all the items within a given scale. Note the types of events to which each type of scale item refers. Also notice the categories on each of the scale items are identical. These are "Male Only", "Frequently Male Only", "Both Male and Female", "Frequently Female Only", "Female Only."

1. Select an elementary school book to be rated. Determine the approximate number of pages in the book.
2. Review the items on a given scale. Select and examine 10% of the pages of the book. Rate each item in the scale that is applicable to the pages examined. If any items within a scale do not relate to the material examined, leave that item blank. Place an "X" at the point on the item you judge to be most appropriate for that book.
3. Repeat the process using different pages for each of the two remaining scales.
4. A more accurate judgement might be made by keeping the following definitions in mind for each category.
   a. "Male Only" - males are consistently given representation
   b. "Frequently Male Only"- males are more often given representation than females.

c. "Both Male and Female" - Both male and females are given approximately equal representation.

d. "Frequently Female" - Females are more often given representation than males.

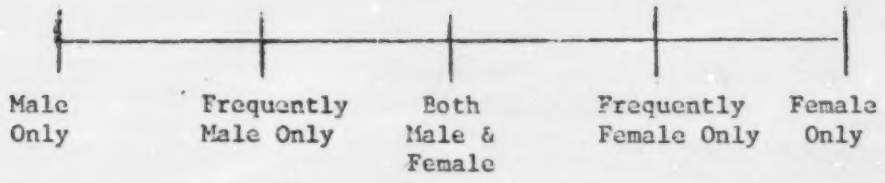
e. "Female Only" - Females alone are consistently given representation.

5. Complete one rating scale booklet for each book rated.

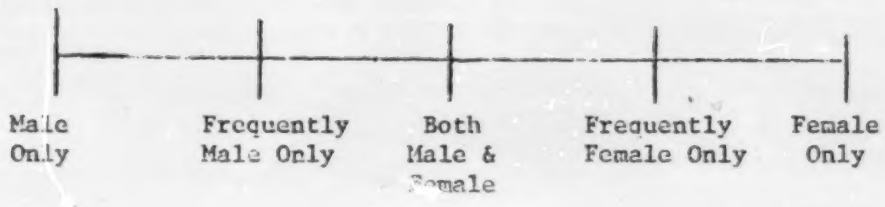
6. Return all the rating booklets to the project director.

CONTENT

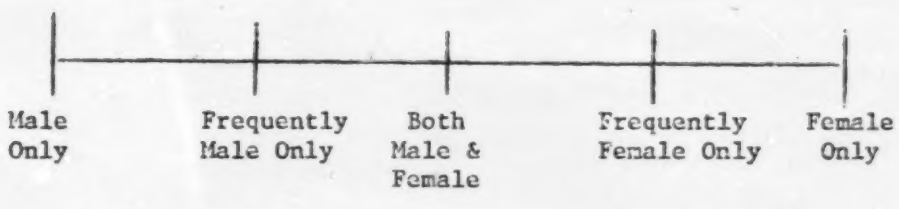
1. The main character (s)



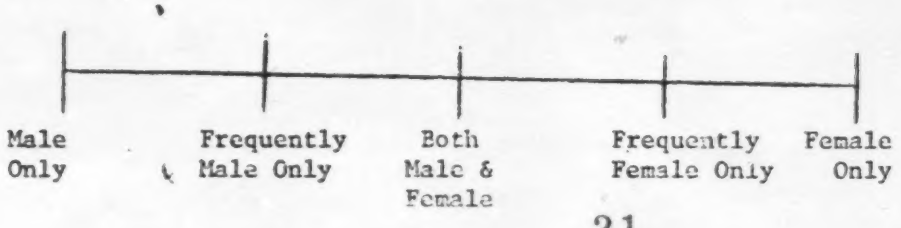
2. Concern for the feelings of others is shown as a characteristic of



3. Adults with employment outside the home are

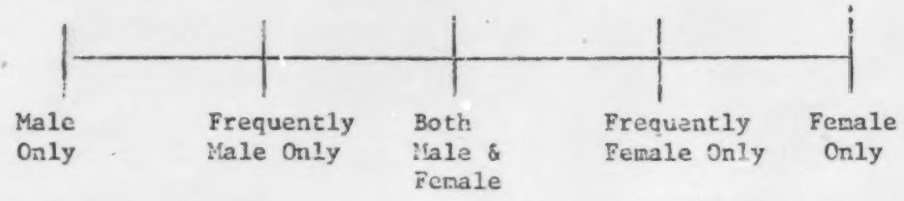


4. Problems are solved by

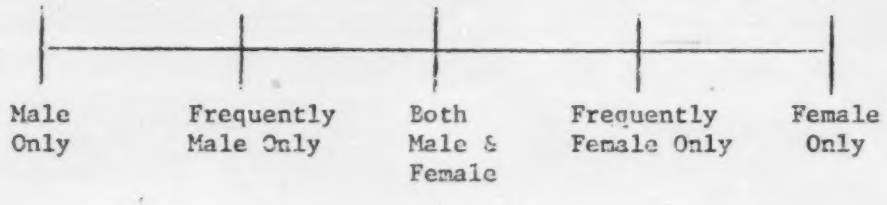


Content (cont't)

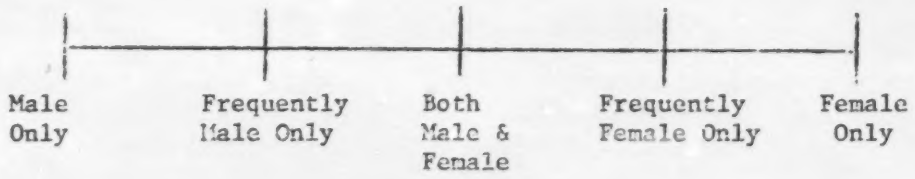
5. Strength and courage are manifested by



6. Individuals shown crying are



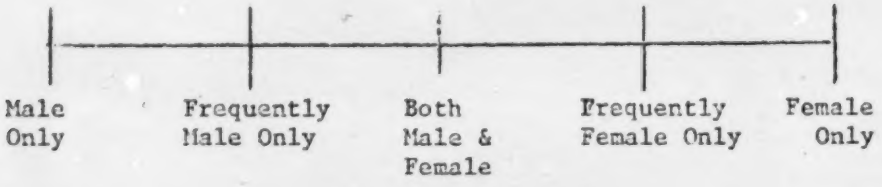
7. Household tasks are done by



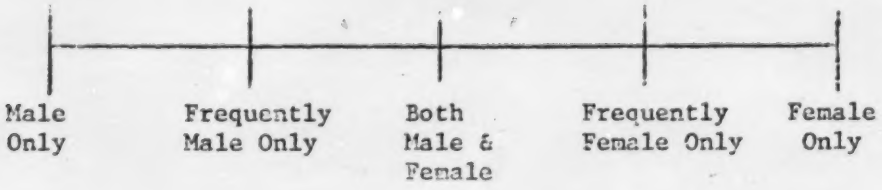
8. Music and art are appreciated by

Content (con't)

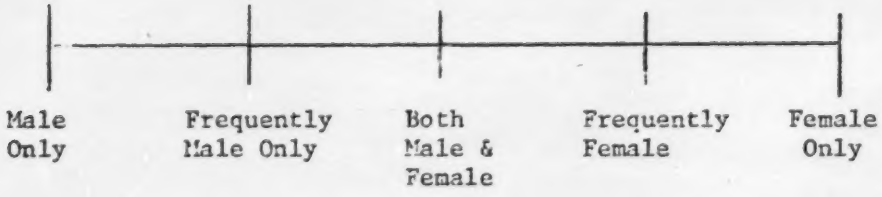
9. Machinery is operated and things constructed by



10. Authority is exercised by



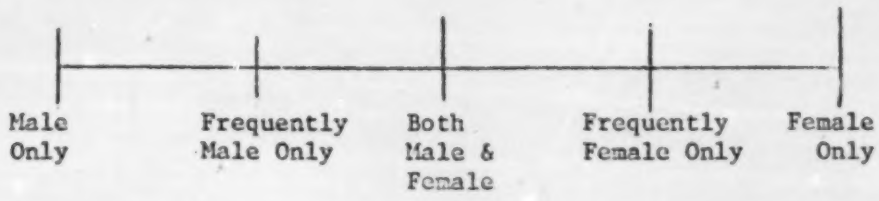
11. Persons who are aggressive are



LANGUAGE

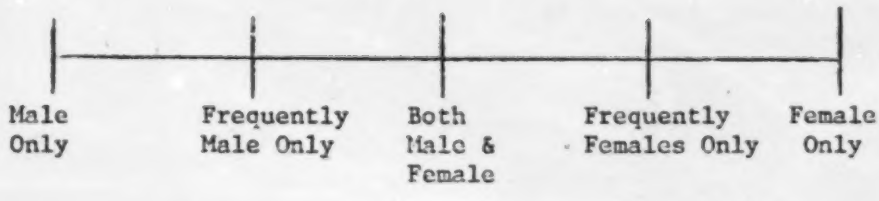
1. Reference to people

Example
mankind - human



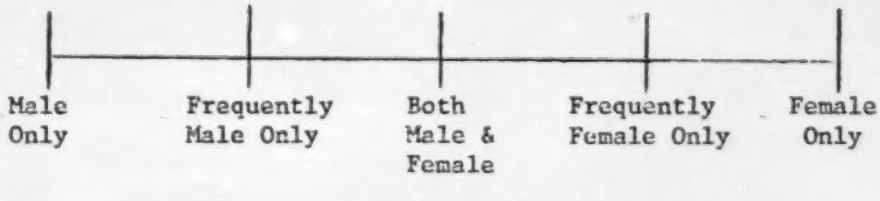
2. Reference to Roles

mailman vs mail carrier
saleswoman vs sales clerk



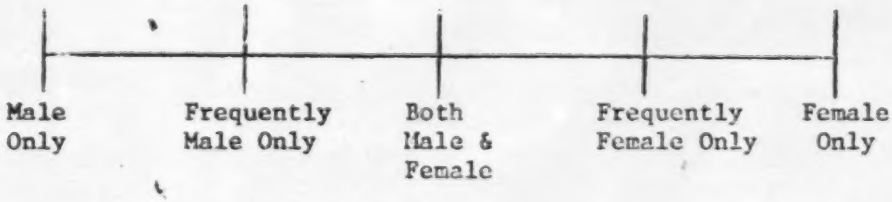
he, she, her, him

3. Reference to abstract person who may be of either sex



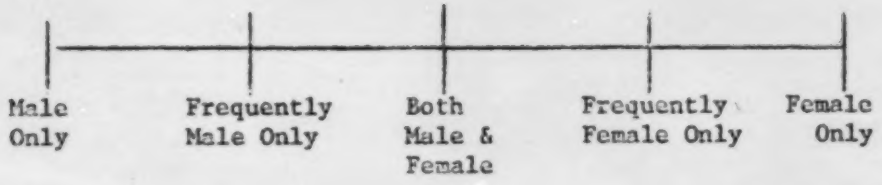
4. Reference to sex when unnecessary

male nurse vs nurse
Ms Jackson wife of John Jackson



PICTURES

1. The main character (s)



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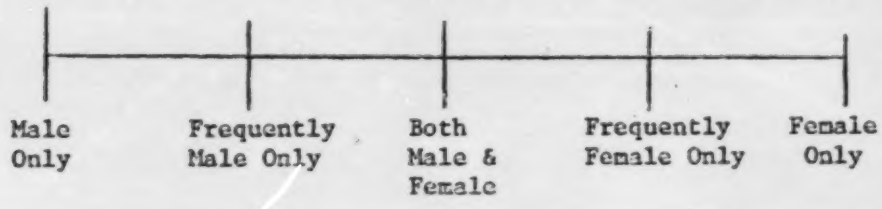

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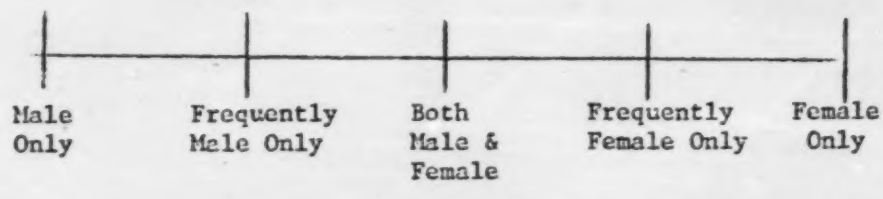

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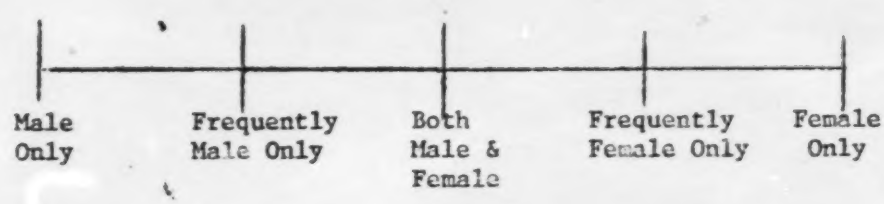

Pictures (con't)

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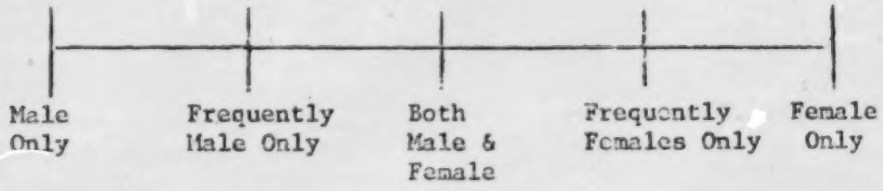

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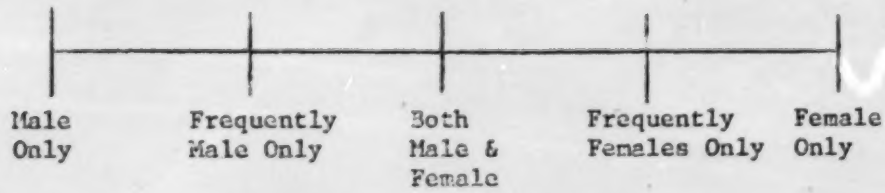

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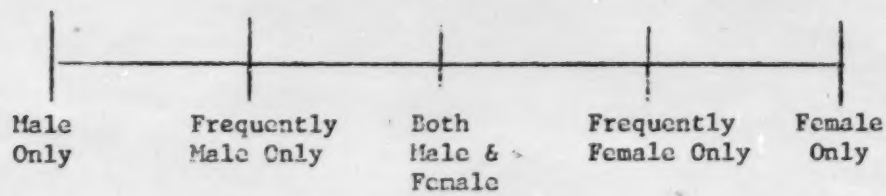

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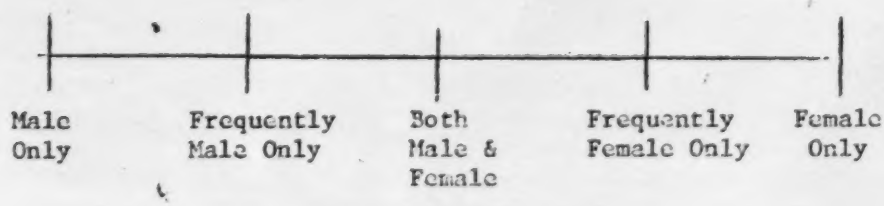

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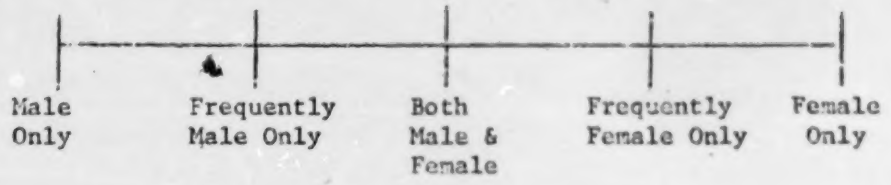
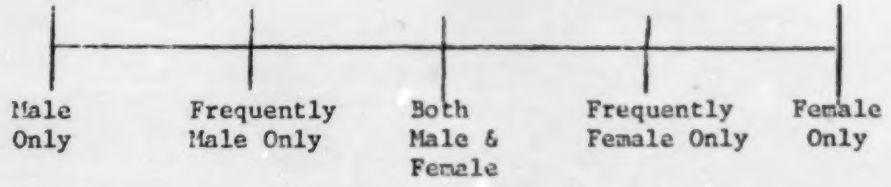
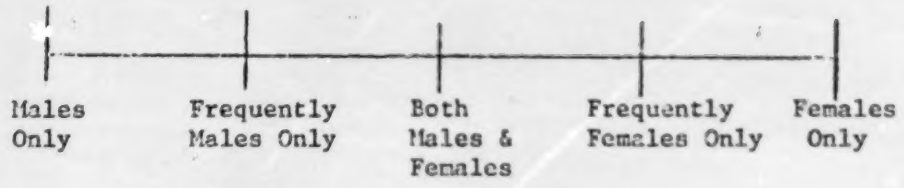
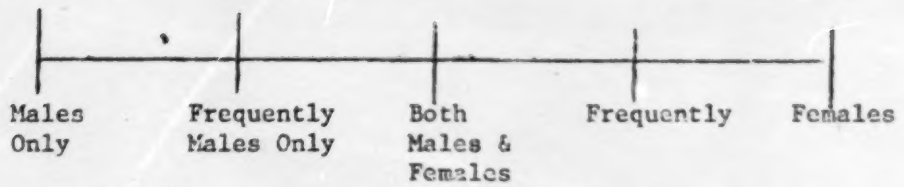


10. Authority is exercised by



11. Persons who are aggressive are





SCORING DIRECTIONS

1. Assign the categories in each scale the following values:

Males Only	= 1
Frequently Male Only	= 2
Both Male and Female	= 3
Frequently Female Only	= 4
Female Only	= 5

2. Reverse score the following scales. (By reverse is meant all 1s become 5s, all 5s become 1s, all 2s become 4s, all 4s become 2s, 3s remain unchanged.

Content Scale

#2 #6 #7 #8

Picture Scale

#2 #6 #7 #8

3. Sum all the numbers for each scale.

4. Determine the number of items rated in each scale

5. Divide the sum score for a given scale by the number of items used in that scale.

6. Place this number at the appropriate point on the profile sheet.

SCORING:

Female Only	5
Frequently Female Only	4
Both Male & Female	3
Frequently Male Only	2
Male Only	1